

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

AID-20 OMB-01 RSR-01 /101 W
----- 084321

R 020916 Z MAY 73

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9551

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL KARACHI

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: GOVERNOR WARNS AIR MARSHAL AGAINST PUBLIC MEETINGS
IN PUNJAB

REF: LAHORE 0452

1. ON APRIL 30, PUNJAB GOVERNOR MUSTAFA KHAR REPLIED TO RETIRED AIR MARSHALL ASGHAR KHAN'S ORAL ATTACKS ON BHUTTO (REFTEL) BY WARNING THAT MASSES SO ANGRY OVER ASGHAR'S SPEECHES THAT GOVERNMENT COULD NOT INSURE HIS SAFETY AT PUBLIC MEETINGS. GOVERNOR SAID HE GIVING WARNING IN EFFORT TO AVERT UGLY SITUATION WHICH MIGHT OTHERWISE ARISE AND RECALLED HE HAD GIVEN NAP SIMILAR WARNING BEFORE THEIR MARCH 23 MEETING IN RAWALPINDI, BUT IT HAD NOT BEEN HEDED.

2. ALTHOUGH COUCHED IN LESS VEHEMENT TERMS THAN POLITICAL RHETORIC FROM BOTH PPP AND AIR MARSHALL OVER PAST FEW DAYS (REFTEL), GOVERNOR'S " WARNING" ALSO CONTAINS ELEMENT OF THREAT IN VIEW IT MADE IN CONTEXT OF RAWALPINDI NAP MEETING, WHICH PPP ATTACKED WITH RESULT OF NINE DEAD AND MANY INJURED (IS-LAMABAD 2442). PPP SHOW OF ARMED FORCE IN LAHORE APRIL 29 ALSO ADDS TO SERIOUSNESS OF KHAR'S THREAT.

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3. IN OTHER DEVELOPMENTS OVER LAST FEW DAYS, AIR MARSHALL HAS HAD NUMBER OF MEETINGS WITH REBEL PPP GROUP, MOSTLY AT HOME OF FORMER LAW MINISTER MAHMUD ALI KASURI. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF WEDDING OF REBEL PPP MNA ANWAR ALI NOON' S SON, RENEGADE PPP MEMBERS FROM ALL OVER COUNTRY COLLECTED IN LAHORE AND HELD SEVERAL ROUNDS OF DISCUSSIONS, APPARENTLY UNDER MAHMUD ALI' S LEADERSHIP. THOSE TAKING PART IN TALKS INCLUDED MIR RASUL BUX TALPUR, FORMER PPP GOVERNOR OF SIND, MERAJ MOHAMMED KHAN FROM KARACHI, AHMED RAZA KASURI, MNA FROM KASUR, RAO KHURSHID ALI KHAN FROM SAHIWAL, AND SEVERAL OTHERS.

4. MAHMUD KASURI, WHO ACTED AS UNOFFICIAL SPOKESMAN FOR GROUP, DENIED THAT GATHERING IN LAHORE WAS PLANNED, BUT WENT ON TO GIVE GROUP A NAME WHEN HE CLAIMED ITS UNITY LAY IN OBJECTIVE OF FORCING PPP TO LIVE UP TO ITS MANIFESTO- THUS, HE SAID, IT COULD BE CALLED " MANIFESTO GROUP." KASURI HEDGED HIS REPLIES TO NEWSMEN' S QUESTIONS AIMED AT DETERMINING WHETHER HE WAS FORMING NEW POLITICAL PARTY.

5. COMMENT: BASICPROBLEM OF BOTH UDF AND " MANIFESTO GROUP" IS THAT THEY HAVE NO LEADER OF NATIONAL STATUS WHO IS ACCEPTABLE IN THE PUNJAB. PIR PAGARO, WHILE NOT ANATHEMA TO PUNJABIS, HAS NO FOLLOWING HERE. WALI KHAN HAS NOT YET LEARNED THAT GOP PRESS, RADIO, ETC. QUOTE HIS STATEMENTS DESIGNED TO PROTECT HIS BASE IN NWFP TO PUNJABI AUDIENCES, WHICH DO NOT ACCEPT HIS BELLICOSE PROVINCIAL ORIENTATION. MAHMUD KASURI HAS NEVER WON AN ELECTION PRIOR TO HIS MEMBERSHIP IN PPP. ASGHAR KHAN IS WELL KNOWN THROUGHOUT PAKISTAN, ADMIRER FOR HIS MILITARY RECORD AND HIS PERSONAL COURAGE BY MANY WHO DO NOT AGREE WITH HIM POLITICALLY, AND ALSO HAS CERTAIN APPEAL TO MILITARY. WE BELIEVE THIS GOES LONG WAY TOWARDS EXPLAINING EXTRAORDINARY DEGREE TO WHICH PPP IS WILLING TO GO TO HARRASS LEADER OF POLITICAL PARTY WHICH HAS BEEN UNABLE TO ELECT EVEN ONE MPA OR MNA.
DECONTROL DEC 31, 1978
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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 MAY 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LAHORE00464
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: LAHORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730533/aaaahimh.tel
Line Count: 101
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 LAHORE 0452
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <18-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 971113
Subject: GOVERNOR WARNS AIR MARSHAL AGAINST PUBLIC MEETINGS IN PUNJAB
TAGS: PINT, PK, PINT
To: ISLAMABAD
KARACHI
NEA
SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005